

CANYONS OF THE ANCIENTS NATIONAL MONUMENT
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
July 6, 2004

Advisory Committee Attendees:

Bob Clayton Chris Majors Mark Varien

Bud Poe Kelly Wilson Bill Lipe

Liz Tozer Chris Majors

Bureau of Land Management Attendees:

LouAnn Jacobson, Monument Manager

Steve Kandell, Monument Land Use Planner

Mike Jensen, Range Specialist

Leslie Stewart, Ecologist

Public Attendees:

Kathe Hayes, Amber Clark, Chris Nickel, Veronica Egan, Jerry McBride, Abbe Smith, Dan D'Ambrosio

Agenda

9:00am - 9:10am	Greetings and Introductions
9:10am – 11:00am	Travel to and Visit Potential Natural Vegetation Site at Hovenweep National Monument at Goodman Point
11:00am - 12:30am	Travel to and Visit Vegetation Manipulation Site off Road N and Burro Point Fuelwood Cutting Area
12:30am - 1:30am	Lunch at Sand Canyon Pueblo <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning and Monument Manager Update
2:30pm - 3:00pm	Public Comment
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Approval of Minutes from the May 19 th Meeting and Next Agenda

Note, the remainder of these minutes describes the discussion associated with each agenda topic.

Greetings and Introductions

Kelly Wilson welcomed all participants. He addressed the Committee and stated that we had a quorum (i.e., at least seven members present). Kelly asked everyone (i.e., Committee members and the public) to introduce themselves. Kelly notified everyone that since the focus of the meeting was to visit areas in the field, the Committee would postpone their review and comment of the May 19, 2004 meeting minutes until they returned to the Anasazi Heritage Center in the afternoon.

Travel to and Visit Potential Natural Vegetation Site at Hovenweep National Monument at Goodman Point

Committee members and the public traveled to and visited a potential natural vegetation site at Goodman Point. This area is adjacent to the Monument and is managed by the National Park Service's Hovenweep National Monument. Leslie Stewart, ecologist for the Monument led the discussion at Goodman Point. Leslie noted that the site was used as part of the BLM's 2001 Rangeland Health Assessment and is classified as a "loamy foothills" ecological site by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Leslie provided handouts to everyone present, which discussed this ecological site and the results from the 2001 Rangeland Health Assessment. Leslie noted that the area was used during the assessment to see what a "loamy foothills" ecological site could look like. She also noted that a site reaching its potential is dependent on several factors. Some of those include the frequency and intensity of fire and uses that occur on the land (e.g., livestock grazing, recreation).

Leslie pointed out several cool bunch grasses in the understory. Some of these native grasses included Muttongrass and Indian ricegrass. Leslie also noted that approximately 13 percent of the Monument was chained historically on this same type of ecological site. Chris Majors asked if prescribed fire could be used in these chained areas, under ideal conditions. Mike Jensen responded that finer fuels are not present in most of these chained areas. As a result, fire is not likely to carry through these areas. Leslie stated that the area was probably grazed in the early 1900s and was then fenced-off once it was established as Hovenweep National Monument in 1951.

Travel to and Visit Vegetation Manipulation Site off Road N and Burro Point Fuelwood Cutting Area

The Committee and members of the public then traveled to the Burro Point fuelwood cutting area. Leslie Stewart informed everyone that the Burro Point area is in the same ecological site classification (i.e., loamy foothills) as Goodman Point. Leslie pointed out how the area was not meeting its potential as defined by the NRCS. She pointed out that there was very few grasses in the understory, which is resulting in soil erosion from water and wind. Bill Lipe asked why there wasn't any cheatgrass in the area. Mike Jensen noted that the historic seeding for cheatgrass probably didn't follow strict grazing management (i.e., rest from livestock grazing). Mike stated that the question now is, as a land management agency, how we deal with areas like this. LouAnn Jacobson added that the Monument is limited in using surface disturbing approaches in these areas, due to the high density of archaeological sites.

LouAnn pointed out that the area has been used historically as a fuelwood cutting area. She noted that allowing fuelwood cutting in the area has resulted in the proliferation of user made

routes. These user made routes are often in conflict with archaeological sites. Mark Varien suggested that small areas, that are manageable, could be designated for fuelwood cutting. Bill Lipe added that BLM should look at the idea of cutting the fuelwood themselves in these areas and then stacking it along the road side for the public to collect.

A member of the public asked what the primary cause was for the condition of the area. Mike Jensen noted that livestock grazing should not be singled out as the cause for the site condition. Mike noted that the site condition is not just the result of livestock grazing, but the type of livestock grazing. Mike noted that a proper grazing management (e.g., rest, rotation, season of use) would result in improved conditions at the site. Kelly Wilson asked the group what the reasons were for attempting to restore the area. Leslie Stewart noted that restoring these areas would help in sustaining the livestock industry in the area, by keeping the soils in place and thus providing for native grasses to grow.

Lunch at Sand Canyon Pueblo

The Committee and members of the public then traveled to Sand Canyon Pueblo. The group again discussed the condition of the area, noting that it also is a “loamy foothills” ecological site. Discussion centered on the historic use of area, its condition and how livestock grazing is managed in the Monument. Following this conversation the group had a picnic lunch. Following the lunch the group took a short hike to view and discuss some of the archaeological sites at Sand Canyon Pueblo. Mark Varien led the discussion, talking about the archaeological research that was conducted in the area by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center.

Public Comment

No members of the public provided any comments.

Approval of Minutes from the May 19th Meeting and Next Agenda

LouAnn Jacobson gave a quick update on travel management in the Sand and East Rock Canyons area of the Monument. LouAnn noted that the Monument is no longer requesting a solicitor’s opinion on the suggested conflict between the Monument interim guidance and the Proclamation. She noted that instead, the Monument is moving forward with an interim strategy to address the proliferation of user made routes and potential impacts to resources. She noted that additional inventory work is going to be conducted along the routes in East Rock Canyon to identify any potential conflicts with Monument resources (e.g., archaeological sites). Mark Varien stated that additional educational materials need to be provided to the public on the area. He noted that he observed a person rock climbing at Castle Rock recently. Bill Lipe noted that he often observes individuals belaying and climbing at Castle Rock.

Steve Kandell noted that as part of the alternatives development process, the Monument will likely look at alternatives ranging from limited mountain biking on designated routes in these canyons, to no mountain biking at all.

Kelly Wilson then asked the Committee if they had any comments on the May 19, 2004 meeting minutes. Both Chris Majors and Bill Lipe provided comments on the minutes that resulted in minor edits. Chris Majors made a motion to approve the minutes. Bob Clayton seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chris Major and Steve Kandell agreed to further discuss the idea of forming a grazing subcommittee before the next meeting. Chris Majors suggested that Mark Varien would be a good selection to serve on this subcommittee.

Kelly Wilson asked the Committee if they had any other items to discuss. The Committee responded no.

Meeting was adjourned